



seed **madagascar**
sustainable environment, education & development



A 6 Month Progress Report for

PROJECT MAHAMPY: PHASE III

Improving the Autonomy of a Women's Artisanal Mahampy Reed Weaving Cooperative

April 2026

Summary

Context

Madagascar ranks 183rd out of 193 countries on the Human Development Index, reflecting significant structural and socioeconomic challenges.¹ Madagascar has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, with *81% of the population surviving on less than US\$2.15 per day*.² Madagascar's economic challenges are further compounded by limited financial inclusion, *with only 18 percent of households having access to a financial account, well below the Sub-Saharan African average of 43 percent*.³ This financial exclusion disproportionately affects women and rural populations who more commonly work in the informal sector.

In Sainte Luce, a rural village in Madagascar's southeastern Anosy region, *economic opportunities are scarce*, especially for women. The community depends almost entirely on lobster fishing as a source of income, an activity from which women are largely excluded. *This reliance on a single livelihood leaves households highly vulnerable to both seasonal fluctuations and unexpected shocks*. Developing alternative sources of income and encouraging savings are key methods for strengthening resilience to such shocks.

Women in Anosy have developed an alternative livelihood activity through weaving Mahampy (a local reed), which supports the provision of a small but vital income for their households, averaging £12.47 each month. Such a contribution has been found to strengthen their role in household decision making, particularly when planning for the future. With low return on investment and poor access to markets however, weaving currently fails to provide women with enough income to break themselves out of the cycle of poverty.

Project Overview

Project Mahampy (2019-Present) addresses the challenges faced by weavers in Sainte Luce by improving the viability of Mahampy reed weaving as an income source. The project established a weaving cooperative and weaving studio in 2019, now comprised of 61 members. Project Mahampy has built capacity within the cooperative through technical and financial trainings, establishing a savings group, and supporting product development and market access. Phase III is an 18-month phase aimed at improving the autonomy of the cooperative, through stronger governance structures, stronger financial management practices, and the provision of business skills to independently engage in the market. By the end of this Phase, SEED aims for the cooperative to have the skills and resources necessary for sustained, independent operation.

SEED is partnering with local Malagasy non-profit, TananaLab, who work with small-scale Malagasy organisations to strengthen business practices, build internal capability, and strengthen leadership skills. TananaLab will support the cooperative by providing tailored business training tools and implementation support to strengthen business practices. The cooperative will then become a business partner of TananaLab's parent company, Tamala Artisanal, a social enterprise who will source larger buyers from broader markets, reducing reliance on competitive, unreliable, and poor-profit potential local markets.

Report Summary

This report discusses activities that have been completed over the past six months from October to April 2026.

Key achievements from this period include:

- Creation of a governing constitution including consultations, co-design, and ratification;
- Elections for all leadership positions held and all positions filled;
- Established a bank account for the savings group;
- Roles & responsibilities training sessions held; and
- First visit and assessment by project partner, TananaLab.

Project Progress

Over the last six months SEED has focused primarily on activities under Outcome One to strengthen the cooperative's internal governance structures and operational capacity.

OUTCOME ONE: Enhanced Internal Governance

Constitution Consultations & Co-Design

Phase III of Project Mahampy began with three cooperative-wide consultation and co-design sessions, facilitated by SEED, to develop the constitution in partnership with nearly all 61 members, held between October 2025 and January 2026. The sessions saw strong attendance and engagement with a 90% average attendance across all sessions and 98% of project participants attending at least one session.

The sessions were held in Malagasy and covered key concerns identified by cooperative members during the previous phase. The drafted constitution was translated to Malagasy and read back to members to ensure it addressed all concerns and reflected the wishes of all members. The final constitution has now been successfully ratified by all members. The updated constitution, based on consultations, outlines membership requirements, the leadership structure, role requirements, processes for enforcing rules, and financial procedures.

Elections for Leadership Positions

Following the creation of the updated constitution, each of the five leadership positions were filled in February 2026. Cooperative members were made aware of all requirements for each position and given the opportunity to nominate themselves for election. As outlined in the constitution, each member was given a single vote for each position, and the member with the most votes was elected. The Cooperative now has a new President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Accountant, and Secretary.



Recording attendance at a cooperative constitution consultation session

Roles and Responsibilities Refresher Sessions

The cooperative is made up of five departments which include, cleaning, sales, quality, stock, and materials. As each weaver in the cooperative is allocated a role within a department, SEED delivered two roles and responsibilities refresher sessions in February and March 2026, to identify and fill knowledge gaps.

The first session centred around an aptitude test to assess gaps in each department's understanding of roles and responsibilities. With an attendance rate of 90% across all departments, the sessions identified common gaps within each department such as mistakes when recording data and a reluctance to provide feedback to fellow cooperative members. These results informed the delivery of session two, which provided tailored sessions on each department's requirements and addressed identified gaps. These sessions were also well attended with an attendance rate of 88% across all departments.

OUTCOME TWO: Improved Economic Skills of the Mahampy Weavers

Savings group collections & documents

The cooperative's education savings scheme (ESS) has continued from Phase II to support members' capacity to pay for their children's school fees. The ESS encourages members to put aside a portion of their earnings monthly to be redistributed just before the start of the school year in August. The annual cost of sending a child to primary school is 60,000 MGA (£10.76), which can be covered by saving 5,000 MGA per month.

On average, each of the 38 ESS members saved 4,364 MGA (£0.78) per month since October, with total individual savings ranging from 4,000 MGA (£0.71) to a maximum of 115,000 MGA (£20.48). 42% of weavers saved for 4 of the 6 months, where 92% saved for at least 1 of the 6. While not as high as expected, Jan-Feb is the lean season when household incomes are tight and excess money for savings is less available.

SEED has also begun the process of setting up a bank account for the ESS. This process has involved numerous trips back and forth with the bank and government officials to have the group formally registered and the account set up. Once finalised, the cooperative will be able to more easily and safely manage the money collected by the group, earning interest on the savings and providing greater transparency over the money storage process.

Tamala partnership & first visit

Jessica, the co-founder of SEED's project partner TananaLab, made a visit to the cooperative workshop in March 2026. Jessica conducted an in-depth assessment of the cooperative's current operational capacity against indicators like governance, communication, production and quality control, order management, and inventory and logistics. The visit gave weavers the opportunity to better understand the role of TananaLab over the coming 12 months and enabled TananaLab to better understand the specific needs of the weavers in their home context. Jessica also attended a workshop training session, conducted home visits with weavers, observed activities on a reed collecting trip, and ran a short workshop on creating products aligned with current trends.



TananaLAB Co-Founder - Jessica hosting a workshop on emerging trends in the artisanal space

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

MEL activities during this six-month period focused on attendance at sessions, regular sales monitoring, and savings data. The data has shown strong interest in Project Mahampy: Phase III sessions among project participants, and lower than usual sales at the workshop. Attendance data for the constitution co-design and consultation sessions showed that 98% of participants attended at least one session, and an average attendance rate of 90% across all three sessions, exceeding the 80% target set out in the log frame. While this data suggests positive engagement with the sessions, SEED will conduct a more qualitative survey with weavers to gain deeper insight into how well they feel their perspectives were heard and integrated within the constitution.

Attendance at the Roles and Responsibilities sessions saw similarly high rates with 98% attending at least one of the two sessions, and an average attendance rate of 91% across both sessions, exceeding the 80% target. As above, the qualitative survey will seek to understand how helpful these sessions were for individual weavers.

Workshop sales data shows a decrease in sales from the Oct 2024 – Apr 2025 period (1), to the Oct 2025 – Apr 2026 period (2). Sales dropped from 167 transactions in period 1 to 112 in period 2, a total of 766,000 MGA (£140) less in generated revenue. A total of 75% of all cooperative members sold a product during period one, whereas only 56% sold a product during period two, meaning less weavers gained income through the workshop during the current reporting period. Given that workshop sales are currently heavily reliant upon tourism to the workshop, this decrease in sales is likely due to external factors such as a reduction in tourism to Sainte Luce. This highlights the importance of diversifying markets for the cooperative, which will become the key focus for the final six months of Phase III.

Next Steps

Project Mahampy: Phase III will run until March 2027, with twelve months remaining. The final twelve months of the project will focus on the delivery of:

1. **Accountability Surveys** – Conducted 3-monthly to understand how well cooperative departments and leadership are functioning in their roles;
2. **Value-Added Product Test** – Trialling the sale of 3 high-quality products in local markets around Fort-Dauphin to determine if there is a local market for higher-cost products;
3. **Financial Literacy Refresher** – To strengthen financial skills from sessions delivered during Phase II;
4. **Business Training** – Delivered by TananaLab based on the assessment conducted in March. Sessions will be supported by tailored business tools & and implementation plan for improving processes;
5. **Diversifying Local Markets** – Sessions with the weavers on accessing new markets locally;
6. **Additional Skills Sessions** – Supporting skill-sharing between members, strengthening technical weaving skills, and addressing other gaps during the 6-month monitoring period at the end of the phase; and
7. **Gradual Transition to Independence** – During the final 6 months to assess readiness for independence and to address issues as they arise before cutting support completely.

References

1 United Nations – Human Development Reports (2026). Human Development Insights. Available at: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks>, (Accessed April 2026);

2 United Nations – Economic and Social Council (2024). Country programme document: Madagascar. Available at : <https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/19601/file/2024-PL3-Madagascar-CPD-EN-ODS.pdf>, (Accessed April 2026);

3 International Finance Corporation (IFC) (2021) *Creating Markets in Madagascar: Country Private Sector Diagnostic for Inclusive Growth*. Washington, DC: International Finance Corporation. Available at: <https://www.ifc.org>, (Accessed: 22 July 2025).